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# THE JUGOSLAV- ITALIAN QUESTION

BY  
JOSEPH GORICAR

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I venture to express the opinion that unless full justice is accorded to the Jugoslavs, and the Balkan is left to the Balkan peoples, there will never be a durable peace in that part of the world; and that the next war will be fought by the Jugoslavs and all the peoples interested in a free access to the Adriatic sea against their exclusion therefrom.

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## A SKETCH OF AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

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Dr. Goricar has been for over 14 years in the diplomatic service of Austria-Hungary and has been for two years in the Courts of Vienna. He was employed in the following consular posts: Paris, Jassy, Constantza, Bucharest, Berlin, Odessa, Belgrade, Nish, Pittsburgh, Denver, San Francisco and again in Berlin.

He tendered his resignation from Rome in December, 1914, which was accepted by Emperor Joseph in January, 1915. He came to America as immigrant in February, 1915, and has taken out his first papers on the 20th of March, 1915, in Chicago.

Dr. Goricar left the diplomatic service of Austria-Hungary because of his conflict with the Foreign Office in regard to the war. Being a Slav, he has strongly opposed making war on the Slavs, and was consequently accused by Count Berchtold, the Foreign Minister, of being a Russophile. He has asked to be placed before a Court Martial, but was refused justice on the ground that his trial would make too much unpleasant stir because he was too well known in many countries. At the first opportunity, he left Berlin, his last post and has ever since devoted nearly all his time to the cause of the Allies, giving much important information to the Russian and French em-

bassies in Rome, in 1914, and during his stay in America to the French Embassy in Washington; also helping to disclose the Pan-German conspiracy in America 1915 and 1916, having been on the staff of the Providence Journal in Providence, R. I.

With the exception of the last year, 1917, when he was employed as clerk and later as laborer in the Carnegie Steel Mills, in Pittsburg, Pa., he has given all his time and thoughts to the Allies, making his own living, and although offered recompense for his services, has never taken a single cent. He was offered a position in the diplomatic service of two allied powers.

# The Yugoslav-Italian Question

By JOSEPH GORICAR.

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Before speaking of how the troublesome Yugoslav question should be solved to bring peace in the southern part of the former empire of Austria-Hungary and in the Balkans, I must say first what should not be done.

The United States of America and her Allies must take as the guiding principle at the peace conference the axiom: "The Balkans to the Balkanians"; that is, the whole Balkan Peninsula, which is considered by the greatest authorities in geography, as extending from the Mountain crest of the Julian Alps east of the Soca (Isonzo) River to the mouth of the Danube, embracing all the territory between the Adriatic and the Black Sea, bounded on the north by the River Drava and the Danube,—should be left to the peoples who inhabit it.

As a logical consequence of the above, it follows that the United States and her Allies must establish as another axiom that no great power shall be permitted to annex any of the territories included in the Balkan peninsula, especially not a power which is neither by race nor religion related to any of the peoples of

that geographic unity. As Russia, Austria-Hungary and Germany are definitely out of the long protracted diplomatic Balkan struggle, it follows naturally that this must apply also and especially to Italy which is neither by race nor religion warranted to annex any of the territories on the eastern shores of the Adriatic.

According to the census of December 31st, 1910, the lands which Italy claims as "Italia Irredenta" on the eastern shores of the Adriatic are overwhelmingly Yugoslav with the exception of the so-called "Littoral." But even in the "Littoral" there is a Slav majority.

In the "Littoral" (comprising as it does the counties of Gorica-Gradiska, Trieste and Istria) there are 437,385 Yugoslavs as against an Italian population of 356,495.

Specifying the above figures we find there are in the counties of Gorica-Gradiska 154,750 Yugoslavs as opposed to 90,119 Italians.

In Istria there are 220,232 Yugoslavs as against an Italian population of 145,525.

In Trieste there are 60,074 Yugoslavs as against an Italian majority of 118,959.

In the city of Gorica there are 10,792 Slovenes as against 14,812 Italians.

The Austro - Hungarian census does not take account of the mother-tongue or "native tongue" but makes its calculations only on the basis of the "language of daily intercourse." Every census is therefore, calculated to underrate the Slovenes. The Austrian ballot, which is the most modern voting system in existence, is a most striking proof of the



above contention, correcting the figures in favor of the Slovenes both in Gorica and Triest.

In the province of Carinthia, whose Southern part is Slovene, there are no Italians.

In Carniola there were only 369 Italians as against a Slovene population of 490,978.

In Croatia, only the town of Rieka (Fiume) has, according to the same census, an Italian population of 28,678 as against a Croat population of 18,128; these figures having been compiled by the local Italian Municipal Board.

In other towns of the Croatian "Littoral" there is absolutely no Italian population to speak of.

As for Dalmatia the figures of the above census are as follows:

Serbo-Croats .....610,669

Other Slavs about..... 2,000

As against an Italian population of ..... 18,028

Yet, in spite of these facts Italy claims not only the whole of the Austrian "Littoral" (Gorica-Gradiska, Trieste, Istria) but also a part of Carinthia and a great part of Carniola, a part of Croatia and the greater part of Dalmatia and also the whole Dalmatian Archipelago or the Thousand Islands of Dalmatia.

These are the facts as far as the ethnology of these regions is concerned.

Has Italy historically and culturally better rights to these regions or territories claimed by her as "Italia Irredenta?"

In the first place, it must be said that according to the Wilson Doctrine his-

torical rights cannot be considered. President Wilson himself has declared in one of his latest peace utterances, that the boundary line between Italy and the newly to be created Yugoslavia will be drawn along clearly recognizable ethnographic lines. If historical rights would come into operation, the Italia Irredenta would have to be claimed by Austria, Hungary, Turkey, Croatia and Serbia as well, as in the long run of the last 2,000 years this area was the most coveted prize of European and Asiatic conquerors and colonial exploiters (conquistadores). In the early part of history these regions belonged partly to the great Roman Empire. The first recorded inhabitants were the Illyrians. In the middle of the 7th Century the Slavs settled in these countries and have been ever since in possession of them, although in the course of time they passed under the domination of different conquerors.

For six centuries, these regions were forming part of the Byzantine Empire, from 530 to 1102 A. D. But the Byzantine rule was only a nominal one. Constantine Porphyrogenete states in his book "De Administrando Imperio" that the Dalmatians in 887 A. D. destroyed a fleet dispatched against them by Venice, and for a century exacted tribute from the "Queen of the Adriatic."

Moreover, the Jugoslavs have occupied in their migration the plains of Venice up to the Tagliamento and even to this day there are some 40,000 Slovenes living in the Province of Venetia. Therefore the Slavs would have just as much of a

historical claim to Venetian territory from Italy.

If Italy bases her claims on the historical rights as derived from the Roman Empire, then she will have to claim, in addition to it, the greater part of Western and Middle Europe.

Admitting for a moment, that the theory of historical rights can be applied in the present case—contrary to all proclamations of President Wilson—has Italy a better chance to base her claims to the above mentioned Yugoslav territory on the fact of the Venetian domination?

The Republic of Venice has always coveted the Eastern shores of the Adriatic. Throughout the middle ages, she was making attempts to conquer those Slav lands. The Venetian domination was an episode in the history of the Yugoslavs just as was the Turkish domination. Also the Turks could on the basis of historical rights make similar claims to the Italians.

Italy, being a modern creation, never owned a particle of any of the lands described as *Italia Irrendenta*, and least of all not a particle of the lands inhabited for thirteen centuries by the Yugoslavs.

The best proof, that these Yugoslav lands must be taken as a national entity of their own was given by Napoleon the Great who after the Peace of Schoenbrunn founded the "pays Illyriens"—(Illyria) out of the provinces claimed now by Italy, that is Carniola, Carinthia, (the Southern Slav part), Croatia, Trieste, Gorica-Gradiska, Dalmatia, Istria, and the Republic of Ragusa.

This "Terre-Irredente" Napoleon did not include with Italy.

Can Italy claim possession of these lands on the basis of cultural rights?—Never. The mere fact that some coast localities of Dalmatia have an "Italian character" does not prove anything. That the architecture of buildings looks like Italian, does not give any right for annexation of the whole territories inhabited by peoples of Slav race. There was a time when the whole architecture of New England was Greek. Could the Greeks claim possession of the New England states on that ground?

The culture in these lands is Slav and purely Slav. This Western Branch of the great Slav race, living on the crossroads of three cultures, Latin, German and Slav, have developed a Slav culture of their own.

Even on religious grounds, Italy can make no claims to these lands. Though the Slovenes and Croats are Roman Catholics, it must nevertheless not be forgotten that their conversion to Christianity was achieved not by Italian missionaries but by the two great Slav apostles, Cyril and Methodius in the 9th Century, who translated for the Slavs the Bible and the first Liturgy into the old Slav (Bulgarian) tongue.

Their first disciple on the Adriatic shores was Clement. This Liturgy, under the name of "Glagolica," is still preserved to the present time. It has a special script which has nothing to do with the Latin or Gothic script.

Viewed from all angles, geographic, ethnographic, historical, cultural, religious,

the lands, coveted by Italy, are purely Yugoslav, not excepting the Littoral where the Yugoslavs are in majority.

It follows, therefore, that the Italian claims to annexation of these lands must be by the peace conference emphatically repudiated and Italy excluded from the mainland of the Balkan peninsula.

Fully conscious, that these lands are Slav and have in the future to form an absolutely independent unity in the family of nations, the Yugoslavs (Slovenes, Croats and Serbs of the Dual Monarchy) started to struggle for unification and independence more than two generations ago under the leadership of the immortal Croatian patriot and greatest Christian orator of the 19th century, Bishop Strossmayer. The most momentous event in this struggle for independence was the Resolution of Rieka (Fiume) of October 4, 1905, adopting the principle that "every nation has the right to decide its own destiny." The soul of this movement was the Dalmatian patriot, Franjo Supilo.

The Fiume platform was adopted two months later at Zadar (Zara), Dalmatia, by the Serbian deputies, and was consequently adopted as the platform for all the Yugoslavs, Slovenes, Croats and Serbs. The resolution aimed at the unification of all the Southern Slavs in one compact national entity. It became one of the main causes for the Austrian and Hungarian statesmen, to go into war against Serbia in order to destroy by the sword what through 'peaceful' means they were unable to prevent.

The proofs for this my contention, I

have compiled in a yet unpublished manuscript.

It was the framers of the Fiume Resolution, Franjo Supilo and others, who managed to escape at the beginning of the World War from Austria-Hungary, that were to devote all their energies to make the Allied Nations and their statesmen understand a just solution of the Yugoslav problem.

I must admit that one of the reasons why this great idea has not met with more enthusiastic response among the great masses of immigrants of Yugoslav birth in the United States of America, is very largely due to the fear of persecution by Austria which through its agents and through Ambassador Dumba and numerous consuls has constantly threatened the immigrants to punish their families at home, confiscate their property, and in many other ways which are well known to the American authorities.

The adoption of the Corfu Declaration, in the middle of the year 1917, which meant the substitution of the Kara-georgevich Dynasty for the Habsburgs, further embroiled the situation. The Yugoslavs of Austria-Hungary, especially the Slovenes, who are intellectually and culturally of higher standing, and are of pacific and most democratic nature, have naturally balked at embracing the above Yugoslav idea and therefore have formed a program of their own at the convention in Chicago in August 11, 1917, aiming at the unification of all the Southern Slavs including Bulgars, under a Republican form of Government.

At a second convention in the middle of September, 1918, at Springfield, Illinois, of the Slovenian National Benevolent Society, of Chicago, which numbers 18,000 members and was represented there through 102 delegates, it was unanimously voted for a Yugoslav Republic.

As for myself, I have advocated these ideas as a most suitable platform for the unification of the Yugoslavs from the beginning of my second coming to America, that is since February, 1915. I was always for a strong Federal State of all the Yugoslavs including the Bulgars, and as embracing all the territories inhabited by them, between the Adriatic and the Black Sea, with a common Diplomacy, Army and Navy, and Customs.

As a cardinal point of the relations among these Slav sister-nations, I pointed out the following:

The place of every Slav nation inside the Slav family must be the following: "A Daughter in her mother's house, a mistress in her own"—

Not being a politician and never having associated with any of the contending groups among the Yugoslavs, I would recommend the following solution of the Yugoslav question:

1.—Withdrawal of all Italian troops from all the territories inhabited by Yugoslavs.

2.—The opening of communication between the different groups existing in America, working for the liberation of their kinsmen in the old country, and the de facto Yugoslav Government of Zagreb. This would clarify at once the situation.

3.—Inasmuch as three-fourths of the Austrian Jugoslavs have at some time or other been in the United States and have full confidence in the principles and doctrines of the Republican form of Government, an International Commission under the leadership of the United States should be formed at once and should proceed to the territories in dispute between Italians and Jugoslavs to prepare the preliminary work for the taking of the p'ebiscite.

4.—The taking of a plebiscite under American, British and French supervision with the assistance of Italian and Jugoslav delegates.

Being, through my long association with the affairs of Austria-Hungary and the Balkans, thoroughly conversant with the problems confronting the Allies, and having clearly foreseen many a great event in this World War, I venture to express the opinion that unless full justice is accorded to the Jugoslavs and the Balkan is left to the Balkan peoples, there never will be a durable peace in that part of the world; and that the next war will be fought by the Jugoslavs and all the peoples interested in a free access to the Adriatic sea against their exclusion therefrom.

Italy entered the war avowedly for principles of humanity. Now she turns back to the Pact of London of 1915, which was extracted from Russia and her Allies in the hour of great stress. It must not be forgotten that Italy sided with the Allies because the latter have



promised her a greater territorial expansion. It is not to safeguard herself against possible future invasion, which a contented Yugoslavia will never strive for, but for purely imperialistic aims that Italy annexes to-day 1,000,000 Jugoslavs. She annexes Carniola for the purpose of obtaining possession of the mercury mines of Idria, the greatest in the world; of the grottos and caverns of Postojna (Adelsberg), the world's greatest subterranean marvels, and her great forest areas; she annexes the Thousand Isles of Dalmatia, and Dalmatia herself for her famous fisheries and the scenic beauty of the Adriatic coast. She proposes to make of the Adriatic an Italian Lake in the hope that according to the principles established by Captain Mahan in his famous work on Sea Power, she will control by annexing the eastern shores of the Adriatic, also their "hinterland." I am more than convinced at this time that, in order to upset the danger that is threatening the Jugoslavs from this new direction, a new constellation of powers will soon form itself *nolens volens*.

The Jugoslavs will have to ally themselves with the peoples living to the north that is, the Magyars and Germans. For the Germans and Magyars it will be an easy matter to play the old game of 'divide et impera' among the Jugoslavs. Moreover Italy is economically a backward country. It will mean absolute economic ruin to the Jugoslavs of the annexed territories, if Italy is there to stay. Italy has had more than disastrous ex-

perience in trying to establish herself in Erythrea and Tripoli.

It is to the supreme interest of the Italian people that a third attempt at expansion, this time on the volcanic soil of the Balkans, be prevented ere it is too late. The group of men advocating the annexation of the Yugoslav shores of the Adriatic is a small one. They are the imperialistic and militaristic group of Italy wishing to show their nation the fruits of a military victory.

But was the Italian victory on the Piave a military one or was it not the Wilson doctrine that was victorious in the ranks of the Austro-Hungarian Army?

It must not be forgotten that Italy after her disastrous defeat by the Austrian Army called the Yugoslav leaders to Rome in April, 1918, and that an understanding was reached there which completely overthrew the Pact of London. Moreover when the Yugoslavs heard of the Wilson principle that the frontier between Italy and the newly to be erected Yugoslavia will be drawn along clearly recognizable ethnographical lines, they were fully convinced that justice would be done enough to prevent the forcible seizure of their more than thirteen hundred years old seats by a new conqueror.

It would be a serious blow to international moral as represented by the Allies if President Wilson's word would be overruled by imperialistic tendencies of the allies of the United States of America.



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